



## Department of Veterans Affairs

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FOR RELEASE: Thur., Aug. 27, 2013

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### **Veterans Service Officers Recognized for Their Service to South Dakota's Veterans**

PIERRE, S.D. – County and tribal veterans' service officers (VSO) and staff from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs were recognized for their dedication to serving veterans and veterans' families at an awards program Monday, Aug. 26, in Pierre.

The annual event, organized by the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, was held in conjunction with the veterans' benefits training conference for county and tribal VSOs from across the state.

"The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and our VSOs are here to serve all veterans from every conflict and every generation who have defended our nation and the American way of life," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "It is important to recognize individuals who provide outstanding service. Working together, we will continue to be the voice for South Dakota's veterans and their families."

Pat Kroupa of Sioux Falls received the Jim Melgaard Award, which distinguishes Pat as the 2013 County Veteran Service Officer of the Year. As the VSO for Minnehaha County, Pat was recognized for her outstanding commitment to veterans, dedication to filing fully developed claims and ability to earn the trust of veterans.

Ken Lindblad of Huron, representing Beadle and Sanborn Counties, was awarded the 2013 Robert Lindblad Award for demonstrating excellence in outreach programs and communication efforts.

Tim Reisch of Sioux Falls was awarded the 2013 Glenn Green Advocacy Award. Reisch, Veteran's Service Officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs claims office in Sioux Falls, was recognized for his ability to navigate claims, job knowledge and commitment to veterans.

Sheila Carpenter, administrative assistant for the Hughes, Stanley and Sully County VSO office, and Kathy Schlecht, assistant CVSO for Brown County, were awarded the 2013 Support Staff of the Year Award.

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Former VSO's Lowell McFarland of Douglas County (11 years) and Tom Gohn of Brown County (23 years) were recognized by the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers Association for their years of service to South Dakota's veterans.

Secretary Zimmerman also recognized Ryan Fowler (nine years), Steve Oliva (nine years) and Larry Person (30 years) for their hard work and continued commitment to the Department and to South Dakota's veterans.

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(Photos available upon request)